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PRINCIPALS' VIEWS OF HOW THEY MOTIVATE THEIR TEACHERS

BY

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THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO

MY HUSBAND AND OUR CHILDREN

GARRY, ASHLEY, AND GRAEME

AND

TO

MY FATHER, AND MY BROTHER

BENJAMIN (1932 – 1981), AND GORDON (1961 – 1979)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine methods principals reported they utilize to motivate their teachers. Nine principals in a large urban school district in Alberta were interviewed and responses to the interview schedule were recorded, coded and analysed. Data was analysed via an iterative process comprising of: three passes of the data, identification of major themes, and identification of sub categories within themes.

The findings, themes and sub categories were generally consistent with and in support of the previously reported methods used by principals to motivate their teachers. Eight themes, with subsequent sub categories, were derived from this study: reinforcement, open communication, decision making, modeling, visibility, showing confidence, support, and other. One theme that emerged that was not previously reported in the literature reviewed was visibility in the school.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The field of education has had its share of difficult times over the last number of years. It is reasonable to assume that the educational reforms put in place by the present provincial government have had an affect on the quality of education in Alberta. In1994 school boards across the province first began to feel the ramifications of these reforms. In the name of fiscal restraint, monetary cutbacks to the field of education were the order of the day. At that time, Bauni Mackay, President of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), alluded to these budget cuts with the following statement: "Alberta's system cannot absorb such massive cuts without a negative effect on classrooms." School boards, their central offices, and their schools have seen a ripple effect from decreased funding and there is every indication that continued inadequate financial support from the provincial government will be a contributing factor to the impending budget deficits that schools will incur.

The recent underfunding of our public education system has far reaching implications. Ultimately, it has translated into fewer

resources, both material and human, and larger class sizes, as well as uncertainty among members of the teaching profession. Such a situation could result in low staff morale and motivational issues among teachers. As the Superintendent of the Edmonton Public Schools (EPS) system pointed out:

> It is clear that the road isn't going to get any easier when it comes to getting more funding. Both the education minister and the premier have told us not to expect a huge reinvestment into public education. The deficit for 1997-98 will be12.4 million dollars and, for 1998-99 a further deficit increase of16.3 million dollars is expected. ... What does this mean for staff? Traditionally, when there are cutbacks, we see bigger classes, more combined grades, less staff, and fewer resources.
>
> (Dosdall, 1999, p.1)

Clearly, the job of the teacher continues to be challenging in every respect.

As education continues to be chronically underfunded, it has become even more crucial that motivated and committed teachers in the classroom be the norm. This is certainly the case if the future of our children is to be as bright as we hope it will be. There is no systematic information about how principals have/are responding to this administrative challenge. As a teacher I have had an opportunity to observe motivational techniques used by school principals and believe that it would be valuable to identify how principals maintain

high morale among teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the means by which elementary, junior high, and high school principals achieved or maintained high morale among their staff during these times of ongoing fiscal restraint. In general terms, I investigated how principals in the EPS system developed and sustained morale among their teachers, and whether personal factors influenced their practices in this sphere of administration.

Method

Nine principals from a large urban school board were studied. Three were from the elementary level, 3 from junior high school and 3 were high school principals. Data were analysed via an iterative process comprising of: three passes of the data, identification of major themes, and identification of major sub categories within themes.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, specific open-ended research questions were used to guide the participant interviews. Participants were asked the same interview-initiating

questions and their responses were audio-taped. This research was designed to find answers to the following global questions:

1) How do principals perceive they increase morale among teachers?

2) What types of strategies are reported to be utilized?

3) Do background experiences affect how principals increase morale among teachers?

4) Do principals report to deliberately utilize strategies to increase morale?

5) Do reported strategies differ at the different levels of public education?

Significance of the Study

In the face of increasing pressure on teachers to perform in the classroom and dramatic budget cuts associated with education, the principal has the challenge of maintaining the motivational levels of his or her staff. Many factors have come into play in recent times that appear to be instrumental in the creation of low morale among teachers. A study conducted by Andrews, Parks, and Nelson (1985, p. vii) stated that the following conditions contribute to this decline in teacher morale:

> Compensation and benefits for teachers have not kept pace with those in comparable fields of work; the clientele in classrooms has changed radically; values of our society are in

transition; and economic conditions do not bode well for education.

Bearing these conditions in mind, school personnel are invariably providing more services and being asked to do more and more. Coping with these changes has meant that school systems need to provide more services with less money, to a wider range of clientele, and to a society in transition. School systems are in a position of needing to win back public confidence. In addition, with school based budgeting, there is a trend toward a far more business oriented approach to education with schools competing among one another for clientele. More clientele means more base funding, which in turn could lead to more and improved programming. The downside to this is that the situation could ultimately translate into a heavier workload for the teacher, with less recognition and other rewards.

Principals find themselves in the middle, between the board they represent and the teachers they support. In attempting to appease both ends of the spectrum, principals find themselves caught in a dilemma: they must attempt to acquire or maintain a high level of morale on a potentially overworked staff, even while meeting the demands of their boards. How an administrator

achieves this end is of relevance. As Sergiovanni (1991, p. 321) contends, "in this idiosyncratic world, one-best-way approaches and cookie cutter strategies do not work very well. Instead, diversity will likely be the norm as principals practice." Moreover, "motivational theory suggests that people are likely to be more personally invested in their work within an organization when they have a voice in what happens to them and their work has meaning and significance" (Sergiovanni, 1990).

It is important, then, to identify the characteristics of, or methods used by, principals to either sustain or to acquire higher levels of morale among staff. Indeed, the bureaucratic approaches of the past, which simply used such techniques as extrinsic motivation to attain greater performance from subordinates, will no longer suffice in successful leadership (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Researcher Beliefs

It is necessary to reveal my beliefs about the way that principals motivate their staff. I made every attempt to not let these distort my analyses of the data.

First, my belief was that motivated teachers will work harder and provide stimulating, success-oriented classroom environments

to help ensure the success of their students. Therefore, the motivation of staff must be done at a conscious level.

Second, my belief was that principals who motivate their staff nurture a positive environment throughout the school. I believe that a positive school environment is highly conducive to mutual respect between administrator and teacher, and cohesiveness of the staff.

My third belief was that the findings of the study could be transferable and that principals throughout the system could find a summary list of effective methods of motivating staff a useful tool.

Having identified these beliefs, every attempt was made to overcome the possible effects of these biases.

Definition of Key Words

Morale. Websters New World Dictionary defines this as the "moral or mental condition with respect to courage, discipline, confidence, enthusiasm, willingness to endure hardship etc., within a group, in relation to a group, or within an individual." Andrews, Parks, and Nelson (1985, p.11) expand upon this, and include four factors generally associated with high morale: belongingness, togetherness, achievement, and self or group esteem.

Staff. All individuals working within the school, i.e. teachers,

teacher aides, interpreters, secretaries, and custodians. However, for the purpose of this investigation, more emphasis has been placed on the teacher – administrator relationship.

Limitations and Delimitations

According to Eichelberger (1989, p. 242), *limitation* refers to "an aspect of the research study that limits the confidence the researcher would have in fulfilling the purpose of the study." The following limitations apply to this study:

1. The study may have been limited by the unwillingness of the participants to share all their methods of motivation with me.

2. The study may have been limited by the knowledge that participants may previously have had regarding theories of motivation.

3. The study may have been limited by the fact that observation as a research tool was not used because of its impracticality and therefore I was dependent on participants' comments throughout the interview schedule.

Eichelberger (1989, p. 243) also defined *delimitations* , as "those modifications in the research procedure that the researcher

made to increase the quality of the study. A delimitation is usually made to decrease the error, or noise in a study." The following delimitations apply to this study:

1. The study was delimited to examining the methods utilized by nine school principals to motivate staff.

2. The study was delimited to interview method and data analysis.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter Two presents a review of literature related to the motivation of staff. Chapter Three outlines the research design and method including the sample and population, ethical considerations, the pilot study, development of the interview schedule, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods. This section also recounts how participants were selected. Chapter Four provides a report of the findings. Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The area of motivation is not new to the field of education. The fact of the matter is that "the problem of motivating staff is a perennial one. Ever since organized activity began, administrators have been confronted with the problem of motivating employees so that they move towards full commitment to organizational goals" (Batchler, 1981, p. 44).

As early as the late 1940s theorists began to challenge the assumption that economic gain was the only motivating factor for employees. The *human relations* movement brought about a whole new area of research. The famous Hawthorne Studies (Roethlisherger and Dickson, 1947) revealed that the way workers felt about themselves, their fellow workers, and their organization were important factors in production effectiveness and efficiency, thus unveiling the importance of the human effect. While this was an important step toward the revelation that motivating factors were indeed an integral part of organizational success, Miles (1965) made the point that in the human relations model,

management was involving members only to achieve decisions that would be carried out in an efficient and effective way.

The *human resources* model, however, took another step in the right direction. Miles (cited in Gallmeier, 1992, p. 4) stated that

> [The human resources model] is a model built on the assumption of organization members as important sources of ideas, problem solvers, decision makers, and controllers. The purpose of participation is to utilize these important human resources and improve organizational decision making, performance, and control. Self-control and self-direction should grow in accordance with the growing competence of members of the organization.

One can see the potential that this model has for the study of motivational techniques utilized in the field of education. Gallmeier (1992, p. 4) points out why this is the case.

> The human resources model seems particularly appropriate for the educational organization for many reasons. First, the workers (teachers) of the organization are highly trained professionals who normally operate from a broad base of experience. Second, they often have a great deal of autonomy and freedom to operate their classes in their own way. Third, they are held accountable for the result of their teaching activities. Fourth, a group of students provides for a dynamic and unique situation that requires a great amount of local control, creative decision, and adaptations.

Clearly, this model does have relevance for this study and does integrate well with the literature reviewed for this investigation.

This review will examine the literature on the motivational

techniques utilized by administrators in schools.

Motivational Techniques

The concept of motivation is one that must be addressed as a matter of concern in the practice of school administration. Sustaining teacher interest and performance is essential to attaining school-wide goals and student achievement. Katz and Kahn (Hanson, 1996, p. 218), write that,

> [Motivational] techniques must be responsive to three organizational needs. First, people must be attracted to and be retained by the organization. Second, people must be induced to conscientiously and effectively perform their organizational tasks. Third, people must be spurred to engage in creative and innovative work-related actions that resolve problems in increasingly effective and efficient ways.

Certainly, such is the case in the teacher/administrator relationship. In order that staff achieve set goals and levels of performance, "principals must focus on the development and maintenance of a positive school climate" (Calabrese, 1987, p. 66). The use of motivational tools to ensure that such a school climate is realized, has been dealt with in the literature to some degree. In the literature the motivational tools continually discussed include such devices as:

> Formal evaluation process, verbal feedback, written feedback, equipment and materials, conferences, job

> enrichment, released time, public recognition and awards, opportunity for professional growth, involvement in decision making, personal interest in growth needs (Mills, 1987, p. 38-39).

Mills found that the major function of the principal was to motivate his/her teachers to higher levels of performance. The use of any one of the above mentioned tools, depending upon the individual teacher, would motivate that person to achieve.

Schmoker (1996, p. 104) found that teachers crave recognition and reassurance. His research substantiated Mills' findings that certain motivational tools would motivate teachers to perform. He states that "sincere, regular praise, plus recognition and celebration of accomplishments, may be the most overlooked ingredient in results-oriented leadership."

Likewise, Keaster (1995, p. 44) also indicated in one of his research articles that "teachers need to be encouraged, openly and often. Notes in mailboxes and praise in private and public assures teachers that they are appreciated for the work they do."

Autonomy in the classroom is an area which Raelin (1989) found to be significant in the motivation of teachers. He refers to four management strategies that foster this teacher autonomy: professional development activities, mentorship opportunities, dual

career ladder, and project management opportunities. These findings appear to be consistent with Mills' (1987) in that they fall under the umbrella of the "opportunity for professional growth."

George and Stevenson (1988) also found that relative autonomy was commonplace for success in attaining and maintaining high levels of performance in middle schools. "Principals reported again and again, that within the school's guiding philosophy there was ample room for teams to create their own policies, schedules, activities, and curricular plans" (p. 18). And, in keeping with this theme of a motivational technique, Schlechty (1990, p.152), stated that "leaders of schools for the twenty-first century must learn to teach others to make decisions rather than reserving decisions to themselves." Principals also made "numerous references to the importance of supporting teachers with inservice sessions aimed at their interests and concerns " (George & Stevenson, 1988, p. 20). Further to this, Sparks and Hirsh (1997, p. 96) agreed that "staff development is at the center of all education reform strategies; without it, such strategies are merely good ideas that cannot find expression."

Ellis (1989) is in agreement with Raelin (1989) on the issue of

classroom autonomy. She found that if teachers had academic freedom to plan their lessons and select their resources, and if they received consistent and effective feedback regarding the success of these chosen strategies, then "their internal work motivation would increase" (Ellis, 1989, p. 22). Her research showed also, that effective job-enrichment programs (jobs that offer teachers increased levels of responsibility and released time to work on curriculum development) would also motivate teachers to higher levels of performance. However, job-enrichment should not be forced upon teachers who are not interested in it, and the concept should not be confused with job-enlargement – more work to do in the same time and for the same money (Ellis,1989). Further, DuFour (1986, p. 35) too, contended that "the implication for a principal seeking to motivate staff members seems clear: simply give teachers more freedom in what they teach and how they teach it and watch their morale improve." However, he believed that for this to be truly effective, the concept of "simultaneous loose-tight properties" had to come into play. Simply put, this is where the organization (a) demands adherence (tightness) to a few non-negotiable values which have been deemed important by all its members and

(b) simultaneously, allows for individual creativity and autonomy (looseness) in day-to-day activities (DuFour, 1986).

Krupp (1994) dealt with the qualities of the person in the position of leadership. She contended that natural leaders share six characteristics: They know themselves, like themselves, take control, demonstrate flexibility, accept reality, and live fully" (p. 27). Each characteristic has implications for being motivating.

Knowing oneself allows one to recognize strengths and weaknesses and work accordingly, enhance strengths, and delegate in areas of weakness. This allows teachers to take on added responsibilities in their work place.

Liking oneself allows one to think positively and set achievable goals, express thoughts, and control one's decisions. Principals possessing this quality can be instrumental in establishing a positive school climate, valuing diversity, empowering others, and rewarding improvement. Again, the motivation factor is evident – morale is high when one works in a positive school climate.

Taking control is the next characteristic. Principals take charge, make decisions and take responsibility for consequences, and focus on solving problems. They empower their staff and send out a clear

message of belief and trust in them. This implies the concept of autonomy previously cited in the literature as motivating to teachers (DuFour, 1986; Ellis, 1989; Krupp, 1994; Mills, 1987; George & Stevenson, 1988; Raelin, 1989; Schlechty, 1990).

Being flexible is important in a leader. Here one perceives changes in oneself as evidence of growth rather than as a defect. With flexibility principals model growth for their staff and create a climate for change, one in which teachers try new approaches. Krupp (1994) was in agreement here with the research that shows that teachers are motivated by job-enrichment (Ellis, 1989).

Accepting reality means that principals communicate honestly with their faculty and provide them with support in confronting difficult issues. This is consistent with the findings by George and Stevenson (1988), that effective communication between administrators and teachers was "prompt, candid, open, fair, frank" (p. 20). They added that "one additional dimension of administrator communication is the practice of modeling, by which the principal emulates the qualities expected in teachers' relationships with students" (p. 20). In keeping with this, Keaster (1995) also found that modeling is a crucial characteristic of a successful and motivating principal. As one

principal stated:

> Expect nothing of the troops that you, as the general, wouldn't and don't do yourself. Adopt the attitude that every person in the school is just as important as the next. Preach it and practice what is preached. Rid yourself of the notion that principals make decisions and everyone else does the dirty work (Keaster, 1995, p. 41).

Living fully means that principals have other interests outside school and can enrich their schools with their out-of-school experiences. They also encourage their teachers to do the same. This is in line with Mills' (1987) research, which points out personal interest in growth needs as a motivational tool. Krupp (1994) commented,

> Principals who succeed in developing the motivational characteristics described here will be rewarded with school climates where not only they, but their staffs [too] know themselves, like themselves, exercise control, remain flexible, accept reality, and live fully" (p. 29).

In keeping with the importance of the characteristics and actions of a principal, Joyce and Showers' (1988) research found that active formal leadership is essential. "The call for active instructional leadership has been so consistent that it has become a cliche, but what an important truism of practice it is ... Leadership needs to be very active bringing about cohesion in the faculty ... " (p. 19). A

committed leader will ultimately reap contented followers.

Sergiovanni (1990) conducted research in corporate America to define excellence in leadership. He came up with the three Es: empowerment, enablement, and enhancement. These three terms have, for years, been successful in business and may have, in turn, great implications for the teaching profession. They are defined as follows:

> *Empowerment* is practised when authority and obligation are shared in a way that authorizes and legitimizes action, thus increasing responsibility and accountability.
>
> *Enablement* is practised when means and opportunities are provided and obstacles are removed, permitting empowered persons to make things happen, to be successful. Unless enablement accompanies empowerment, empowerment becomes a burden and indicators of effectiveness become illusions.
>
> *Enhancement* leads to enhancement. Followers' roles are enhanced when empowerment and enablement are practised and the leader's role is enhanced as a result. The leader's role is transformed from manager of workers to leader of leaders. Role enhancement for both results in increased commitment and extraordinary performance (Sergiovanni, 1990, p. 96).

These three Es, could be relevant to educational administrators who seek to motivate their staff.

Sergiovanni's findings substantiate the research done by Bredeson (1989, p. 20), who concluded that,

> principals clearly had come to understand that power in the schools was not a finite resource that had to be guarded and conserved but was a reserve of infinite energy, ideas, and possibilities for bringing about the second wave of educational reform. The empowerment of teachers.

He found that "levels of activity and wider ranges of decision latitude (empowerment) depended greatly on relationships of trust and collegiality established over time." With empowerment established, enablement and enhancement would follow suit.

Further to this, Maehr, Midgley, and Urdan (1992) confirm the same findings in a study they conducted. They also determined that empowering teachers enhanced staff morale. Clearly, principals practising this kind of leadership stand to elicit high levels of performance from their staff.

Summary

The review of literature substantiates the theory that principals play an important role in motivating their staff to higher levels of performance. It was determined that the field of education, in regards to the matter of motivation, falls under the *human resources* model. The literature certainly supported this. Many of the sources quoted alluded to the fact that including teachers in decision making and allowing them input into organizational goals

worked as a motivating factor. The literature confirmed that using employees as "resources" proved successful. **Table 1** provides a summary.

The table shows that many and varied techniques and tools are used to motivate teaching staff. Motivational tools utilized in the process of influencing teachers to optimal levels of performance ranged from the more tangible extrinsic items i.e. verbal and written feedback, materials and resources, to the intrinsic meta level motivators (Mills, 1987), such as professional growth and autonomous decision-making.

Clearly, allowing teacher autonomy in the classroom (providing professional encouragement) is a motivational tool that came up frequently in the literature (Calabrese, 1987; DuFour, 1986; Ellis, 1989; Krupp, 1994; Mills, 1987; George & Stevenson, 1988; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Schlechty, 1990; Sparks, 1997). Limitations were pointed out in this area by DuFour (1986). He explains that autonomy as a motivator can only be successful if the concept of "simultaneous loose-tight properties" is in place, whereby organizational and individual values are considered. The literature reviewed implies that "principals underestimate their own power. They do determine a

Units of information about motivating staff	Findings from the Literature Review															
	Calabrese	Mills	Raelin	Ellis	DuFour	Krupp	Bredeson	Sergiovanni	Kenster	Schlechty	Mucht et al	Schmoker	George et al	Sparks et al	Joyce et al
1. REINFORCEMENT (extrinsic & on-going)															
Notes, verbal compliments					X				X			X			
Public recognition		X	X		X				X			X			
2. OPEN COMMUNICATION															
Sharing information						X									
Honesty & forthrightness													X		
3. DECISION MAKING															
Encouraging staff input in school-based decision making					X		X	X		X	X				
4. MODELING															
Actions & values-						X			X				X		X
5. SHOWING CONFIDENCE (P.D.)															
Encouragement: Professional	X			X	X	X				X			X	X	X
Professional assignments	X	X				X									
6. SUPPORT (A variety)															
Recognizing need for balance															
Support: class & parental						X									
7. OTHER (Time, funds)	X														

Table 1
Motivational methods evident in the literature

building's culture. They make the difference between whether teachers feel overburdened and powerless - or valued and respected" (Armstrong, 1989, p. 23). Ultimately, they do play an important role in motivating staff and have a number of tools available to them to use in the process. In his recent research Gallmeier (1992) concluded "that there may not be one best style of leadership behavior" (p. 8). Principals need to find what works best for them and, more importantly, which particular approaches will elicit optimal performance from their teaching staffs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was qualitative and descriptive in nature. Data were collected for this study by means of semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews permits the focusing and limiting of questions in order to "approach the world from the subject's perspective" (Berg, 1995, p. 33). The case method was used to address the research questions. This was the chosen method because I wanted to gain as much insight as I could into the research question, "How do principals motivate teachers?" Interviews were conducted according to a series of questions (see Appendix 1) and probing techniques were used to "thicken" data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The semi-structured approach allowed for individual participants to expand upon any questions they chose to, and for me to probe where I thought there was a need for further explanation. The interview situation typically permits much greater depth in information than other research data collection methods (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

I felt it was important to establish at the outset of the

interviews, background information that would be relevant to the way the participants presently administered their staffs. The following questions, Why did you go into teaching?, Tell about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them? and How did previous principals motivate your efforts? must all be addressed individually so as to establish their influence on the participants' methods of motivation.

Peoples' backgrounds and experiences often play a major role in who they are as administrators and how or why they perform in certain ways. The participants' responses to these questions could very well have a lot to do with what they deem, at this stage of their professional lives, to be relevant to the motivation of their staffs. Insight may be gained through examining the specific responses to these questions. These responses will be analysed to see whether or not the participants' administrative behaviors, concerning motivational techniques, were shaped at all, by these early influences.

Sample and Population

The population considered for this research study was all principals in a large urban school district. The sample comprised nine

school principals who were purposefully selected. There were three females and six males. They ranged in ages from mid-thirties to mid-fifties. Three were elementary level principals, three were junior high principals and three were high school principals. To preserve anonymity participants were assigned pseudonyms.

The sample was selected based on the following criteria: (a) the willingness to be involved in the study; (b) representative of all three tiers in the education system; and (c) both male and female representatives at each tier.

All participants in the study were asked to sign a document of consent (Appendix 2) indicating their approval and willingness to participate. All participants were informed of their right not to participate, or to withdraw from participating, in the study at any time, without fear of reprisal.

Confidentiality was assured by the researcher. The following pseudonyms were used to identify participants throughout the study: Al, Bob, Colleen, Dave, Earl, Fran, George, Harry, and Isabelle. Descriptive information about each participant and his/her school were kept to a minimum in order to prevent any chance of recognition of individuals or schools.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was obtained from the Department of Educational Policy Studies. This was done in adherence with University of Alberta requirements outlined in the document titled *University standards for the protection of human research participants* (1991).

The following ethical considerations guided this study:

1. Written permission to conduct the research was obtained from the appropriate representative of the large urban school district.

2. The purpose of the study was outlined by letter to the appropriate representative of the district.

3. The purpose of the study was outlined over the telephone with each individual participant, and again in writing, prior to the interview.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted which allowed me to test the interview schedule, method of data collection, and method of data analysis. Four elementary school principals were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. The interviews were transcribed and

coded, using open coding techniques. Common themes emerged and were seen as important in the success of the school as a whole. I benefited greatly from this experience in that it afforded me the opportunity to strengthen my interviewing skills. Throughout these four interviews I learned to develop a more active listening style and provided the participants with an adequate amount of time to respond to questions. After the interviews, oral feedback from the participants confirmed the appropriateness of the questions used in the interview.

It appeared from the pilot study that principals did indeed deem motivation an important aspect of their job and were able to list methods of motivation used to motivate their staffs.

Data Collection

Each of the nine participants was interviewed individually in May and June of 1998. Eight of the interviews took place in the participants' work environment (e.g., his/her school office). The remaining interview took place at my school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were audio-taped, with permission, then transcribed into a computer file, and printed out. A copy of the transcript was provided to each respondent to allow

him/her to check the record for clarity of content and intent. Participants were given the opportunity to inform me of any changes or deletions to the data. However, all participants felt comfortable with their initial responses, so changes to the transcripts were not necessary. After careful consideration of the data, I felt satisfied with the participants' responses and did not feel the need to question them further.

All quotations from the responses given by the participants have been edited for grammar and readability. Changes made to preserve confidentiality are enclosed in square brackets, thus [...]. Care was taken to not distort any of the meaning intended by the respondents.

Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness

Four basic criterion can be used to establish that the data and associated analyses are "trustworthy." That is, we can trust the data to be truly representative of the respondents and the context from which they were collected; the repeatability of the data from similar respondents in a similar context; the degree to which data are representative of other respondents in other contexts; and the

relative independence of the data from the biases and research motivations of the researcher.

In the classic rational-analytic paradigm these criteria have been traditionally satisfied by establishing the internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity of the data.

In the naturalistic paradigm however, we refer to parallel constructs – namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Krupa, 1994).

Specifically, these constructs may be described thus.

Credibility. How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?

Transferability. How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?

Dependability. How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) contexts?

Confirmability. How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on of the inquirer?

Method of Establishing Trustworthiness in the Present Study

Establishing credibility:

In this investigation credibility (or truth value) was established via the use of member checks, testing the data, and constant comparison of the data (Guba (1981, p. 85) calls this establishing structural corroboration or coherence). The following procedures were undertaken to ensure credibility:

1. Participants received and reviewed their transcripts and checked for accuracy.

2. Personal interpretations of the data were checked with respondents whereupon they could agree or disagree with interpretations of statements made.

3. Final results were shared with the respondents.

Establishing transferablility:

For the purpose of this investigation the following methods were implemented:

1. A "thick" description of the data was developed by following up with respondents on any unclear data.

2. Transferability was actually embedded in the investigation because respondents from the three tiers of the public education system (elementary, junior, and senior high) were used to see whether or not results would transfer across these tiers. Perhaps collecting data at the college or university level from the Dean of a department would establish transferability to an unsimilar context.

Establishing dependability:

This was established in the present investigation via the following methods:

1. Data were shared with a few members outside of the sample population, at each of the three tiers of public education (elementary, junior, and senior high school), to determine whether the investigator's findings would be repeated with similar respondents in similar contexts.

2. An audit trail was used to ensure trustworthiness.

3. A dependability audit of the processes utilized in the investigation was completed by a peer.

Establishing confirmability:

A major issue in establishing the confirmability or objectivity of the data is for the researcher to recognize his/her biases. Such bias may come from knowledge of theories in relation to the area under investigation. For example, theories of teacher motivation. Becoming aware of such factors is referred to as theoretical sensitivity. This was checked via the following method:
Some of the respondents were asked to interpret selected sections of their own transcripts/data and share their interpretation to establish whether it matched the interpretations of the investigator.

Description of Participants

The following is a brief description of each of the respondents and of the setting in which they work. To protect their identities and to ensure confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms to replace their names. The schools in which they work will be identified as small, medium, large, or very large based on the student population. The term "small" refers to those schools with student populations of less than two hundred; "medium" refers to those schools with student populations of two hundred and one to six hundred; "large" refers to those schools with populations of six hundred and one to one thousand; and "very large" refers to those schools with student populations over one thousand and one.

"Al" was a forty three year old male principal of a small elementary school. The student population was made up of the regular stream (kindergarten to grade 6), and special needs students who were bused to the school. His manner was friendly and easy going. At the time of the interview, Al had worked in the field of education for eighteen years and had been a principal for two years.

"Bob" was a forty five year old male principal of an elementary school with a medium student enrollment. This school population

consisted of regular students, without any identified special needs students at all. He was easy to talk to and took a lot of pride in his school as he took me on a tour around it. At the time of the interview, Bob had been in the field of education for nineteen years and a principal for nine years.

"Colleen" was a forty seven year old female principal of an elementary school with a medium student population. This school also served regular students, with no identified special needs students. She was vivacious and was eager to share her knowledge and information. At the time of the interview, she knew that she would be transferring to another school and thus was very busy. Colleen had been a principal for fourteen years at the time of the interview and had worked in the field of education for twenty six years.

"Dave" was a forty one year old male principal of a junior high school. His school had a medium enrollment. This student population was comprised of both the regular stream (grades 7-9), and special needs students who came to him from outside the community. Although he seemed nervous at the beginning of the interview, he soon relaxed and seemed confident in his replies throughout the

interview. Dave had been a principal for two years at the time of the interview and had worked in the field of education for seventeen years.

"Earl" was a fifty year old male principal of a junior high school. His school also had a medium enrollment. This school population consisted of students housed in the regular grades 7-9 program and offered a district language program as well. He had a very quiet demeanor and a wealth of experience to contribute to the interview. Earl had worked in the field of education for twenty seven years and had been a principal for fourteen years at the time of the interview.

"Fran" was a thirty eight year old female principal of a junior high school. Her school also had a medium enrollment. This school population consisted of 3 distinctive programs and also housed a special needs program. She had a very competent and confident air about her and I found her to be very willing to share her experiences and knowledge with me. This respondent had been a principal for two years at the time of the interview and had worked in the field of education for fourteen years.

"George" was a fifty four year old male principal of a high school. His school had a very large enrollment. He was very informal and

easy to talk to. He had been a principal for five years and worked in the field of education for twenty seven years.

"Harry" was a fifty six year old male principal of a high school. His school also had a very large enrollment. He was much more formal and serious in his approach to the interview. This respondent had been a principal for seventeen years at the time of the interview and had worked in the field of education for thirty three years.

The final respondent, "Isabelle," was a fifty four year old female principal of a high school. Her school had a medium enrollment. She was very friendly and easy going. I found her easy to talk to and very sure of herself. She had been a principal for three years at the time of the interview and had worked in the field of education for twenty three years. For a summary, see **Table 2**.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data involved two processes. The first process involved listening to the audio tapes a number of times to ensure a deeper understanding of the participants' responses. I then transcribed the audio tapes on computer and finally copied them to paper format. I then read and reread these transcriptions a number

RESPONDENTS	GENDER AGE	YEARS IN EDUCATION	YEARS AS A PRINCIPAL	SIZE OF SCHOOL			
				Small	Medium	Large	V. Large
Al	M 43	18	2	X			
Bob	M 45	19	9		X		
Colleen	F 47	26	14		X		
Dave	M 41	17	2		X		
Earl	M 50	27	14		X		
Fran	F 38	14	2		X		
George	M 54	27	5				X
Harry	M 56	33	17				X
Isabelle	F 54	23	3	X			

Table 2
Description of respondents

*Note: For size of school the following scale has been used:
Small: less than 200 students
Medium: 201 to 600 students
Large: 601 to 1,000 students
V. Large: over 1,000 students

of times to search for themes of data and sub categories within these major themes. The journal which I had written in after each interview allowed me to make use of thoughts that emerged during the interviews.

The second process of data analysis involved an open coding technique followed by axial coding that broke the interview data into themes. Responses to each question were reviewed and a series of themes and sub categories was developed based on the response of the informants. I used a cut and paste technique here. Each question was written on a large sheet of paper and the participants' responses were cut and pasted into themes that emerged. Cut and pasted answers were then color coded with highlighters, by educational tier (elementary, junior, and high school). This was done so that I could see, at a glance, the differences and/or similarities among them. Data which specifically referenced motivational techniques used by the respondents were then recorded in matrix format (i.e., informant x themes and sub categories). No attempt was made to fit the informants' responses to pre-existing motivational theories; hence, the themes and sub categories of motivational techniques were grounded in the responses and experiences of the informants.

However, it is recognized that theoretical sensitivity may be compromised and/or contaminated by pre-existing knowledge of motivational theories and personal experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) on behalf of the participants..

Three iterations of the data analysis were performed in order to constantly compare the themes of motivational techniques and to reduce them to a series of first, second, and third order sub categories consistent with standardized coding approaches (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Finally, a table was developed to categorize the data. The findings from the study are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter describes the findings obtained from the interviews with nine principals. The findings are organized/presented according to themes and sub categories.

Background Experiences and how they Affect the way Principals Increase Staff Morale

"Reasons for Going into Teaching"

Responses to the question, "Why did you go into education?" contained four clear themes. They are as follows: positive experiences (role models, events), family influence, opportunity to apply acquired knowledge, and teaching perks (holiday time).

Positive experiences.

Al replied:

> Well that's an easy one. When I was younger I had a teacher who helped me out in a very difficult situation. I've always remembered that and have always wanted, since that time, to give something back to the profession and to be like that person.

Similarly, Earl tells of significant others in his youth who helped to guide him to where he is today.

> I think probably the most significant factor is that I had some teachers in high school who I really thought were incredible.

> And they were significant role models for me and they are friends even to today, almost thirty years later. I looked up to them; they were coaches and they were mentors.

George also alludes to past teachers as being a major factor in his career decision. He stated:

> I enjoyed being a student and I had some good teachers that kind of inspired me along the way. And I thought, that would be a good set of footsteps to follow.

While the previous three participants reflect upon significant others as being one of the driving forces behind their career decisions, Bob found positive events to be more instrumental in guiding him to where he is today. He replied:

> I went into teaching because I had experience in teaching swimming, involvement in – coaching kids, involvement in different teaching settings – and it was something I really enjoyed. Teaching was something that I'd always enjoyed and after my first student teaching experience, I loved it and it just confirmed that I'd made the right choice.

Family influence.

Dave introduced the next theme. Not only did he feel strongly that past experiences and teachers influenced his decisions, but he also alluded to a strong familial influence. He shared the following with me:

> I went into teaching because of, I guess, of a love of learning. And I enjoyed several teachers I'd had when I was growing up,

> [who were] inspirational. Also, there were a lot of teachers in my family, you know, and that's probably a large part of it.

Two other participants in the study also believed that familial influences were important. Colleen stated:

> I guess one of the things that happens in families where children are the oldest, we tend to be caregivers of younger siblings. And I only have a younger sister, but I remember from the time that we were really young, playing school with her and being the teacher and having her sitting in the desk.

Isabelle replied to this question in the following way:

> It was so long ago! I think, without being long in detail, the time that I was choosing a career, an option for a lady wasn't very much beyond a nurse or a teacher or a secretary. Those were sort of the 3 options that were the most normal. I'm from a family of 4, of which I am the youngest, and nobody had been to university. And my dad decided that that's the way that it should be, that I should go. I wanted to be a secretary but he didn't think that was an appropriate choice for me. So falling to my father's will, I went to university, in education.

The opportunity to apply acquired knowledge.

The third theme that emerged from the data related to question 1 was the opportunity to apply acquired knowledge. One of the respondents felt this to be very instrumental in his choice of careers. Harry replied:

> [Teaching] was an application for what I had studied at university. I was interested in subject matter and wanted to apply it in some way, and I enjoyed communicating in the subject and my appreciation of it, and so on, and I wanted to transmit it to students.

Teaching perks (holiday time).

Finally, Fran also crossed over two categories when answering this question. Not only were teaching perks cited as relevant to the choice made, but also familial influences. She stated:

> Well, I was never going to go into teaching because my parents were both teachers, so I knew better. I decided I would run a clothing store and did that for two years and hated it, because I only got two weeks of holiday a year and I was really quite used to two months, three months with my family. So I thought, what can I do where the holidays are similar? So I went into teaching. The bonus was, I loved it, you know, but the motivator was really the vacation. And I like being at the same place as my kids, you know, now that I have a family of my own.

"Influence of Other Principals"

The next question, "Tell about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them?" also proved valuable in shedding light on the participants' past experiences. The participants responses to this question suggested eight major themes. These were: recognition of staff, interpersonal skills, integrity/honesty, modeling, showing confidence, visionary, organizational skills, and commitment and professionalism.

Recognition of staff.

Two of the respondents cited recognition of staff as being an admirable quality in an administrator. Isabelle said it very simply:

> One who knows very well that the way to a staff's heart, very often, is just recognition.

Dave expanded upon this, and added:

> Going back to [Stan], he had a knack of getting (not asking) people to do things, but just very subtly: writing thank you notes for things you were never thanked for before; but all of a sudden here's a little note that says "Gee, thanks for that bulletin board, thanks for taking time to move a few things for so and so." Suddenly, that little bit of praise got you thinking, "Okay, I'll do a little bit more then." It made you feel good. He had people who would do anything.

Interpersonal skills.

This theme was mentioned by three of the participants as being a praiseworthy quality in principals they had worked for.

Earl said:

> Yes. Absolutely. There's got to be some warmth there, you know; some empathy and understanding of your staff. He had that.

Bob also alluded to the significance of people skills as a desirable quality in an administrator. He said:

> The ones that I've worked with – and again each one had different traits – but the very first one that struck me as someone that I admired, well he had the ability to work with people. His interpersonal skills were outstanding and you always felt that no matter what happened, he would be supportive.

Likewise, Colleen offered this:

> I guess the thing I admired and continue to admire, because I feel I have this as a strength, is you do have to be a people person, you do have to get to know your public. You have to get to know your staff very well. You have to get to know all of your kids extremely well. You have to get to know your community.

Integrity/honesty.

Integrity and honesty were deemed by a number of the participants to be admirable qualities in a principal. Harry put it in plain terms:

> The quality that I've always admired in principals and expect in principals, is a high degree of integrity.

Colleen expanded upon this.

> The other kinds of qualities I've admired – and I think, I hope, I display those same kinds of qualities – is the honesty and integrity, in situations. For instance, there are times when my assistant principal and I will disagree, we disagree here in the office, we [develop] a mutual plan and we leave this room shoulder to shoulder.

Earl also contributed to this theme when he stated:

> He was a very effective human being and as long as he had a supporting cast he was fine, he was doing fine. But he had to be, to this day, the man of the highest integrity. I always admired that about him.

Modeling.

Modeling also emerged as a theme. Isabelle, for example, looked back fondly as she recounted her experiences with a principal

she had worked with.

> She had a very acute sense of teaching and she was always teaching staff, she was always teaching her assistants. She was prepared to teach you by modeling and to allow you to make mistakes and then correct them. She was an excellent model herself. She never asked anybody to do anything she didn't do herself.

Showing confidence.

This theme refers to principals allowing their staff to "run with the ball," learn from their experiences. It denotes a confidence in their staff in a professional context. Two of the participants had experience with administrators whom they felt exemplified this quality, and felt it to be an admirable one. For example, Fran said:

> I think she was just excellent with professional development. She was just excellent at looking at new ideas for staff and allowing them to explore. She was really good [in that] she let us take programs and introduce them.

Earl had this to share with regard to this theme:

> He was a gentleman who, when I worked with him, his health was beginning to fail and he could not be tremendously mobile. But he had the strength and wisdom, as a mentor, to be able to let go and allow you the freedom to learn in the job and grow from those experiences. He provided the mentorship that was necessary for you to be successful.

Visionary.

The ability to have a vision, to be visionary in their approach to leadership, was seen as a characteristic of administrators who make

a difference and turn things around. Harry shared the following:

> But also a vision. People who've had a vision and could translate that into an application in a school. Communicate the vision to staff and have staff see the vision and buy into that and work with them in achieving that vision.

Dave also felt this to be a desirable quality in a principal. He stated:

> You know, I admire guys that can just come in and make changes where there needs to be change made. It's just obvious. You know, it's common sense that it just needs to happen. There are several people out there, [Dan] is one of them; he took a school and turned it 180 degrees.

Organizational skills.

One of the respondents felt this to be a quality necessary in a principal's repertoire. Bob replied:

> The second thing though, was his organizational skills. Because I felt our school ran extremely well. We had the resources we needed. The whole school ran well and it was because he was so well organized. So I would say that with that person it was also his organizational skills.

Commitment and professionalism.

Two of the respondents saw worth in these qualities. Al said simply:

> I think the pretty common one is professionalism.

Bob stated:

> One principal did not have very good interpersonal skills, but that's just to describe him. But he did have a tremendous commitment to education and doing what was right for the kids. For me, I respected that tremendously and I didn't care about his personality.

Once again, the responses shared by the participants to the question, "Tell me about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them?" do indicate that the qualities of the principals in their pasts have made an impact on them. Each of the respondents was able to recall qualities that stood out in his/her mind as being necessary for administrators to possess. Some of the respondents even alluded to the fact that they themselves hoped to exemplify qualities they deemed admirable in principals from their pasts.

"How Did Principals Reinforce Your Efforts?"

A close look at responses to this question will also help to establish the respondents' background experiences in this area and may cast light upon reasons for their choices in how they chose to motivate their staff. The information gleaned from this interview question did indicate some themes that paralleled the previous themes on qualities. They were: recognition - oral and written, feedback, showing confidence, and visibility.

Recognition - oral and written.

Five of the nine respondents stated that oral and written recognition was one technique used to reinforce their efforts. Harry and George said it most directly:

> Generally speaking, by communicating their satisfaction through both written and verbal forms.
>
> Well, through verbal encouragement I think, as much as anything else.

Dave provided a little more depth when he said:

> I guess every principal has always said, "Good job." The [oral] "Good job." Some have gone to greater extents, writing letters, and acknowledgements through newsletters to recognize teachers and their efforts.

Bob also shared experiences he has had with principals who reinforced his efforts through recognition. He responded with:

> Each in their own way would let you know that you'd done a good job. One would tell you. He would come up to you and talk to you about it and just say you're doing a great job with the kids and parents. The second one was really good about writing notes. You'd go to your mailbox in the morning and you'd see a note there with your name on it and he'd have recognized you in that way. And then the third one would do both. Sometimes in passing, he'd let you know and then he'd give you notes.

Likewise, Colleen referred to recognition, although in a slightly different way, as a reinforcement utilized by those in positions of leadership. She replied:

> Well the kinds of things that principals gave me, and one was to identify strengths in people and play on those strengths. Let them know about them.

Feedback.

Feedback was another theme that emerged through the data collected regarding this question. For example, Al and Fran felt that this was one of the ways they were reinforced as young teachers. They stated, respectively:

> Yes they have reinforced my efforts. They provided feedback, very constructive feedback – both positive and ways to improve – in a professional manner.

> A lot of feedback. Positive usually. I didn't have a lot of people sort of sit me down and say, we should have really tried it this way or that way, but just a lot of positive feedback. So that was good.

Showing confidence.

Five of the nine participants intimated that this was indeed one of the methods used by previous principals to reinforce their efforts. Bob stated:

> They'd show confidence in you by allowing you to do certain things. So there were ways that weren't quite so direct, but them showing confidence in you by maybe taking you to a conference with them or maybe allowing you to do something you've asked to do.

Fran also alluded to this as being one of the reinforcements she

recalled from her years as a teacher. She stated:

> I would say that all of the principals I've had allowed me to go with the ball. I'm a person that would like to think outside the box a lot and come up with a new plan. And they would just allow me to go with that. There was always a lot of flexibility built in. They gave me free reign to try things and risk. Just giving me leadership activities and allowing me to take them on and saying yes, you can take that on.

George also felt that he had the confidence of his administrator and, in fact, the district with regard to a situation he had been in. He stated;

> The kind of unwritten agreement we had in those days was that we'd take any student you send us. We don't care who they are, we'll take them all, BUT you have to give us the freedom to work with them. Don't send us the kids and then start dictating what we had to do once they get here.

Visibility.

The final theme that came to fruition through this set of responses was visibility. One of the respondents felt this to be one method she'd encountered in her past. She replied:

> By simply being visible to people, by making a conscious effort to make sure that everyday a principal has seen every one of his/her staff members.

To summarize, the responses to this question, "How did previous principals reinforce your efforts?" do indicate that the participants were aware of methods used by previous principals.

Once again, it will become apparent in the next section that all of these prior experiences of the participants will have played a role in how they themselves have chosen to reinforce and motivate their own staffs in the present. Many of the themes discussed here will have emanated from the data collected via the interview schedule.

The description of the data collected regarding the major motivational themes and sub categories derived from the data, follows.

How Principals Perceive They Increase Staff Morale

A summary of the data matrix and the major motivational themes and sub categories that emerged as a result of the interview data, is provided in **Table 3**. The table is set up with the themes and sub categories listed down the left hand side of the grid and the participants' responses placed in columns to the right of these. An "X" marked in the appropriate row, and column, indicated the participants' methods of motivation as they emerged from the transcripts.

A description of each motivational technique has been provided. Direct quotations were used in order to illustrate each category and the respondents were identified in the text as Al, Bob,

Units of Information about motivating staff	RESPONDENTS								
	Al	Bob	Colleen	Dave	Earl	Fran	George	Harry	Isabelle
1. REINFORCEMENT (extrinsic & on-going)									
Notes, verbal compliments	X	X		X	X		X		X
Public recognition	X								
Material items (i.e. flowers)			X			X			
Food	X		X			X		X	
2. OPEN COMMUNICATION									
Sharing information	X					X	X		X
Listening to staff (personal/ professional; one-on-ones)	X				X	X			X
Honesty & forthrightness	X		X	X					
Constructive Feedback	X			X					
3. DECISION MAKING									
Encouraging staff input in school-based decision making					X		X	X	
4. MODELING									
Actions & values	X	X	X						
5. VISIBILITY	X			X	X				X
6. SHOWING CONFIDENCE (P.D.)									
Encouragement: Professional		X	X			X	X		X
Professional assignments								X	
Raised accountability						X			
7. SUPPORT (a variety)									
Recognizing need for balance	X	X			X				
Support: class & parental	X			X	X				
8. OTHER (time, funds,)	X		X				X		

Table 3
Findings from this research

Colleen, Dave, Earl, Fran, George, Harry, and Isabelle.

Reinforcement: Extrinsic reinforcement was at the top of the list with each of the respondents. It was considered to be a powerful agent when it came to motivating staff members. The reinforcements referred to specifically were notes, verbal compliments, public recognition, material things (eg., flowers), and food. Each of the participants had something to say about this as a motivator for staff. I think Dave's comment really drove home the importance of this type of recognition. He stated that:

> Things such as a Happygram because someone is doing a great job with the bulletin boards. I would just write that up. [For example] I gave a Happygram to our Social teacher who had been here for fifteen years and teaching for about twenty years. She had done, I think it was a bulletin board, I can't quite remember, but going back to [Jerry] and what he had always done for me, I gave her a little note that said, "Thank you very much." Anyway, she came into my office and was in tears and she said that it had been the first time ever, in her whole career that she'd gotten any such feedback from an administrator saying that she'd done a good job.

Open Communication: A school setting lends itself very well to the whole area of communication. The information gathered in this investigation under the umbrella of open communication were: sharing information, listening to staff (personal and professional; one-on-ones), honesty and forthrightness, and constructive feedback.

While a number of the respondents used techniques in this category to motivate their staff, George and Dave respectively, had this to share:

> What I try to do is to give people as much information as I can, in terms of where we are and what expectations are being put on us by different people.
>
> I put everything out on the table. [I had] an open agenda right from the start. This is what it's all about. This is what is going to happen this year and these are all of the things that I expect.

Decision Making: This issue has become extremely important at the school level. Since the switch to decentralization of funding it has become necessary for staff to be involved in decisions which would directly effect them and their school. Principals who have wanted to make a difference in how they ran their schools, sought out and encouraged staff input into school-based decisions. This was reflected/evident in the data. As Earl shared:

> I think that they respect that I provide them with opportunities to be involved in the decision making. I think they are fairly comfortable with that. They recognize that the big decisions to be made in a school are shared decisions.

Modeling: Modeling refers to specific and desirable actions one takes, in hopes that these actions will be reproduced by others (Bandura, 1977). A school setting is the ideal place in which to set examples so that they can perhaps be manifested in not only staff

behaviors, but also in the childrens' behaviors as well. For example, Bob stated:

> And so that means things like modeling for them. If you're enthusiastic about what you are doing, if you want them to be honest and straight forward and be committed to kids, you had better be! And so they can be motivated through your actions as a model.

Visibility: Numerous participants felt that just being visible around the school, (in the halls, in the classrooms, etc.), had a positive and motivating effect on their staff. In fact, one of the informants believed that lack of visibility could be detrimental to the morale of his staff:

> I think that the visibility around the building is important and certainly I've been affected by that a bit, because I've been out of the building more this year. I'm a member of the Superintendent's Council, so I'm gone Monday afternoons. I'm gone some other afternoons and staff this year are feeling greater discomfort from my lack of presence.

Showing Confidence (P.D.): Such issues as professional encouragement (encouraging teachers to take part in professional development; making their own decisions at the classroom level); professional assignments; and increased accountability (having teachers take ownership for what they've done; that is, present P.D. with the rest of the staff). Six of the nine principals had something to

share with regard to this theme. To quote Harry:

> Again, assignments communicate a message. You know, if we have something that comes up and we ask somebody to do it, what we are really saying is, "Look we have the confidence in you." And that should be a motivator in my mind. We try to motivate people through verification of the importance of their work and the importance of the job overall.

Fran also felt that this category was useful when it came to motivating her staff.

> I was using that accountability to them too, saying, "You've got to take ownership for some of this." I think it's just that. To motivate them [you have] to tap into what it is they need to do; like, "What is it that they want to achieve?" What is it that you see in them that they might be able to achieve as well, because often they are in a comfort zone. I think if you can raise that accountability and raise the heat a little bit they'll just perform fabulously!

Support: Support from administration in the school setting is crucial to the smooth running of it. Support from the person in the position of leadership allows for the organization to run effectively and smoothly and can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. Sub categories referred to in this area were recognizing the need for a balanced lifestyle, and support both in the classroom and with the parents. Some respondents alluded to the need for balance in the lives of their staff. For example, Bob stated:

> Balance means a tremendous lot to me. It does because, as I said, you have to model for your staff and I believe it's

> something that I personally have to work at; I have to work at it every year. My staff is so committed to what they do. My task is to make sure that they don't burn out and that they are able to function in a really productive way. Some of them can lose that sense of balance and so I try to model balance for them. [I do that in] conversations, so they know that there is a life for me outside what I do here and that my family is really important to me, and that physical fitness is important to me. So they know that your emotional health, your personal life, all of that's important.

Putting this in the context of the classroom, Dave said:

> If you are out of district you had better be nice. If you're not in my catchment area and you're a behavioral concern, we are going to say we don't need you. You get nice kids, then teachers can teach. So just that. You take a lot of the stress away and work to make their job easier.

Other: Under this heading I put the few things that seemed not to fit into any of the above themes. They included time – as in personal time for something of personal importance, and funds – as in funding used as an incentive to participate in activities and to spend on desired items. Two respondents had the following to say:

> The other thing I know is that when they do some extra things around the school, there are rewards like maybe being able to leave the school early for something if they have something important happening. Or wanting to go to visit their son at school for a special event. We can provide some extra coverage for those things. So a lot of times it's a give and take. Recognizing that sometimes you have to do things that go beyond the call of duty and we try to accommodate that.

> We really concentrate here on pulling back in terms of extracurricular as well. We looked at user fee programs at

> lunch hour for the kids to get involved in. Parents are busy so the TaeKwonDo, rhythmic gymnastics and Mad Science, those are all user fee programs. This gives the teachers time to focus on getting ready to teach. They focus on the task at hand. So that is a motivator when they know they don't have to do a whole bunch of extracurricular.

Another respondent stated the following:

> And one of the things the teachers asked was, if they were able to bring in this extra revenue through their efforts, could they have a say in how it was spent? And so we worked out a little compromise. We said, half of the extra revenue will go into the good of the school because it will augment our budget to everybody's advantage, but half of it is theirs alone, as a department. And I wouldn't question what they spent it on.

Similarities and/or Differences at Elementary, Junior and High School

The findings of this study revealed that, for the most part, there are few differences among the respondents' motivational techniques when they are looked at in terms of teaching level of staff (elementary, junior, and senior). All the principals interviewed shared many common techniques. However, there are two themes in which there may possibly be differences between the three distinct levels of education. The junior and senior high school principals referred to the decision making theme as one that was motivating. However, not one of the elementary school principals alluded to this as being the case.

The only other thing that stood out in terms of the three levels of education, was under the theme of modeling. Here, quite the opposite was the case. All the elementary school principals noted its success as a motivator, while only one of the principals at the junior and senior high level felt this to be so. Overall, the similarities among the different tiers of our educational system surpass the differences noted.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents an overview of the study and a discussion of the findings as they relate to the literature reviewed. Conclusions and recommendations for further research are presented in the latter part of the chapter. The final section presents my personal reflections.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the means by which elementary, junior high, and high school principals achieved or maintained high morale on their teaching staff during times of ongoing fiscal restraint. Nine principals (six males and three females) from a large urban school board were studied. Three were from the elementary level, 3 from junior high school and 3 were high school principals. The differences and/or similarities found to exist at these three individual tiers of education were also examined.

The sample was selected based on the following criteria: (a) the willingness to be involved in the study; (b) representative of all three tiers in the education system; and (c) both male and female representatives at each tier.

All participants in the study were asked to sign a document of consent (Appendix 2) indicating their approval and willingness to participate. All participants were informed of their right not to participate, or to withdraw from participating, in the study at any time, without fear of reprisal.

Confidentiality of the administrators participating in the study was assured by the researcher. Pseudonyms were used to identify participants throughout the study and descriptive information about each participant and their school were kept to a minimum in order to prevent any chance of recognition of individuals.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, specific open-ended research questions (Appendix 1) were used to guide the participant interviews. Participants were asked the same interview-initiating questions and their responses were audio-taped. This research was designed to find answers to the following global questions:

1) How do principals perceive they increase morale among teachers?

2) What types of strategies are reported to be utilized?

3) Do background experiences affect how principals increase morale among teachers?

4) Do principals report to deliberately utilize strategies to increase morale?

5) Do reported strategies differ at the different levels of public education?

Research Design

The research was qualitative and descriptive in nature. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews permits the focusing and limiting of questions in order to "approach the world from the subject's perspective" (Berg, 1995, p. 33). The case method was used to address the research questions. This was the chosen method because I wanted to gain as much insight as I could into the research question, "How principals motivate teachers?"

The following limitations were noted with regard to this study:

1. The study may have been limited by the willingness of the participants to share all of their methods of motivation with me.

2. The study may have been limited by the knowledge that participants may previously have had regarding theories of motivation.

3. The study may have been limited by the fact that observation as a research tool was not used because of its

impracticality and therefore I am dependent only on participants' comments throughout the interview schedule.

The following delimitations concerning this study were noted:

1. The study was delimited to examining the methods utilized by nine school principals to motivate staff.

2. The study was delimited to interview method and data analysis.

Each of the nine participants was interviewed individually in May and June of 1998. Eight of the interviews took place in the participants' work environment (e.g., their school office). The remaining interview took place at my school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were audio taped, with permission, then transcribed into a computer file, and printed out as a hard copy. Copies of the transcripts were provided to each respondent to allow him/her to check it for clarity of content and intent. Participants were given the opportunity to inform me of any changes or deletions to the data. However, all participants felt comfortable with their initial responses, so changes to the transcripts were not necessary.

Analysis of the data involved two processes. The first process

involved listening to the audio tapes a number of times to ensure a deeper understanding of the participants' responses. I then transcribed the audio tapes on computer and finally copied them to paper format. I then read and reread these transcriptions a number of times in order to begin searching for themes in the data and major sub categories of motivational techniques within these themes.

The second process of data analysis involved an open coding technique followed by axial coding, breaking them into sub categories. Responses to each question were reviewed and a series of themes and sub categories developed based on the responses of the informants. I used a cut and paste technique here. Each question was written on a large sheet of paper and the participants' responses were cut and pasted into themes and sub categories that emerged. Cut and pasted answers were then color coded with highlighters, by educational tier (elementary, junior, and high school). This was done so that I could see at a glance, the differences and/or similarities among them. Data which specifically concerned motivational techniques used by the respondents, was then recorded in matrix format (i.e. by informant x theme and sub categories).

Discussion

Background Experiences and how They Affect the way Principals Increase Staff Morale

I felt it was important to establish at the outset of the interviews, background information that would be relevant to the way the participants presently administered their staffs. The following questions, *Why did you go into teaching* ?, *Tell about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them* ? and *How did previous principals motivate your efforts?* must all be addressed individually so as to establish their influence on the participants' methods of motivation. Insight may be gained through examining the specific responses to these questions. These responses were analysed to see whether or not the participants' administrative behaviors, concerning motivational techniques, were shaped at all, by these early influences. **Table 4** provides a summary of these findings.

Looking at the table it is evident that replies to the first question, *Why did you go into teaching?* did assist me in gaining an insight into, and an understanding of, the relevant factors that helped to determine the participants' career choices.

The next question, *Tell about a principal(s) you've worked with*

Questions asked and themes derived regarding background experiences	Al	Bob	Colleen	Dave	Earl	Fran	George	Harry	Isabelle
#1. *Why did you go into teaching?*									
a) Positive experiences (role models/event)	X	X		X	X		X		
b) Family influence			X	X		X			X
c) Apply acquired knowledge								X	
d) Perks (holiday time)						X			
#2. *Tell about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them?*									
a) Recognition of staff				X					X
b) Interpersonal skills		X	X		X				
c) Integrity/honesty			X		X			X	
d) Modeling									X
e) Showing confidence					X	X			
f) Visionary				X				X	
g) Organizational skills		X							
h) Commitment and professionalism	X	X							
#3. *How did principals reinforce your efforts?*									
a) Recognition (oral & written)		X	X	X			X	X	
b) Feedback	X					X			
c) Showing confidence		X			X	X	X	X	
d) Visibility									X

Table 4

Influences from background experiences of participants

and what qualities you admired about them? also proved valuable in shedding light on the participants' past experiences. The themes that surfaced with this question do indicate that the qualities of the principals in their pasts have made an impact on them. Each of the respondents was able to recall qualities that stood out in their minds as being necessary for administrators to possess. Some of the administrators even alluded to the fact that they themselves hoped to exemplify qualities they deemed admirable in principals from their past.

The final question looked at independently was, *How did previous principals reinforce your efforts?* A close look at responses to this question did cast light upon reasons for the respondents' own choices in how they choose to motivate their staff. In fact, the findings do indicate that the participants were aware of methods used by previous principals and, in many cases, made conscious choices to utilize those methods when they became administrators. It will become apparent in the next section that all of these prior experiences of the participants will have played a role in how they have chosen to reinforce and motivate their own staffs in the present.

When I compared the literature to the data that emerged from this research, it was possible to draw a correlation between the two bodies of information. **Table 5** provides a summary in the form of a data matrix which reveals comparability of the two groups dealt with in this research. These data sets will be examined for parallels, and discontinuities.

Parallels

First, it appeared that there were very distinct parallels or elements common to both groups. The themes on **Reinforcement** (notes, verbal compliments, public recognition, material items i.e. flowers, food) and **Showing Confidence** (encouragement: professional, professional assignments, raised accountability) are the two themes which are the most highly supported in both the informants responses and in the literature. Seven of the literary sources confirmed that professional encouragement and raised accountability worked as an intrinsic motivator for teachers. As Ellis 1989) stated:

> Such jobs offer teachers opportunities to use greater varieties of skills and abilities. Teachers can proceed to higher level tasks, face the excitement of rising to new challenges, grow both personally and professionally, and receive recognition for personal and professional achievement. Taken together, these opportunities cannot help but increase the internal work

Units of information about motivating staff	Findings from this research									Findings from the literature review															
	Al	Bob	Colleen	Dave	Earl	Fran	George	Harry	Isabelle	Calabrese	Mills	Raelin	Ellis	DuFour	Krupp	Bredeson	Sergiovanni	Keaster	Schlechty	Muehr et. al	Schmoker	George et al	Sparks et al	Joyce et al
1. REINFORCEMENT (extrinsic & on-going)																								
Notes, verbal compliments	X	X		X	X		X		X					X				X			X			
Public recognition	X										X	X		X				X			X			
Material items (i.e. flowers)			X			X																		
Food	X		X			X		X																
2. OPEN COMMUNICATION																								
Sharing information	X					X	X		X						X									
Listening to staff (personal/ professional; one-on-ones)	X				X	X			X															
Honesty & forthrightness	X		X	X																		X		
Constructive Feedback	X			X																				
3. DECISION MAKING Encouraging staff input in school-based decision making					X		X	X						X		X	X		X	X				
4. MODELING Actions & values	X	X	X						X						X			X				X		X
5. VISIBILITY	X			X	X				X															
6. SHOWING CONFIDENCE (P.D.)																								
Encouragement: Professional		X	X			X	X		X	X			X	X	X				X			X	X	X
Professional assignments								X		X	X				X									
Raised accountability						X																		
7. SUPPORT (a variety)																								
Recognizing need for balance	X	X			X																			
Support: class & parental	X			X	X										X									
8. OTHER (time, funds,)	X		X				X			X														

Table 5

Comparison between respondents and literary sources

motivation of growth-oriented teachers (p.22).

Modeling (actions and values) was also substantiated by both the participants in the study and by the sources reviewed, as being significant in the motivation of staff.

It appears that these three themes; reinforcement, showing confidence, and modeling are all deemed important and relevant. The stresses and strains placed on the education system in today's society have given way to the necessity of utilizing intrinsic and extrinsic motivators as a means of maintaining staff morale.

Educators have been subjected to a degree of negative public opinion. One needs only to open a daily newspaper to be bombarded with one opinion poll or another having to do with the ills of public education. If educators are to be positively recognized for their contributions to society it would seem that they need to look inside the organization to attain this. Administrators today, recognize this and are making every effort to be that source of inspiration and motivation needed to sustain teachers in their schools.

Discontinuities

Seven out of the nine principals who participated in the investigation felt that **Open Communication** (sharing information,

listening to staff [personal & professional; one-on-ones], honesty & forthrightness, constructive feedback) had a significant impact on motivating their staff to perform. However, the literature reviewed, did not seem to recognize this. Only two of the fifteen literary sources were in agreement with this as an important theme of motivation. There has been a real need for educators and administrators alike, to keep the lines of communication open, both personally and professionally. Perhaps there is some truth to the old expression "united we stand, divided we fall." It may be that the investigators of the research used in this study, were from the outside looking in and were unable to uncover this important theme.

Likewise, **Support** (recognizing need for balance, support: classroom & parental) was also viewed by the principals interviewed as an important element in motivating staff. Here, four of the nine respondents supported this theme, while only one of the sources reviewed indicated this to be the case. Once again, this theme may now, more than ever, be prominent in the minds of today's educators and principals. Principals realize that their teachers need to know that they are supported in every aspect by them. Today's Parent Advisory Councils are more prominent, powerful,

and vocal than ever. Teachers could easily feel intimidated by these individuals when confronted on some controversial issue. Knowing that an administrator will be supportive is crucial to the well being of his/her staff member.

Decision Making (staff input in school-based decisions) received higher recognition from the literary sources than from the participants interviewed. The term "empowerment" (Sergiovanni,~ 1990 and Maehr, Midgley, and Urdan,1992, and Bredeson, 1989) appeared in the literature on a few occasions. This was categorized under the umbrella of **decision making**. This was done because in the instances where this term was used it referred to empowering teachers by giving them a say in organizational goal making (hence, decision making).

It is common knowledge throughout the school system that all staff are involved in making decisions regarding their specific school. School based budgeting exists on this very premise. Since the Edmonton Public School Board has been involved in this type of fiscal planning and goal setting for at least two decades, it is rather surprising that more of the respondents did not allude to this theme as motivating for their staff. Perhaps it is a "given" and principals do

not feel the need to single it out as a motivator, when it is built into the everyday running of a school.

Of the following two themes, **Visibility**, and **Other** (time, funds) only one was alluded to in one of the literary sources read. The matter of time, in the form of release time was dealt with in the literature. The other theme, visibility, was not dealt with in the literature. Yet both were deemed to be important by a number of the informants in the investigation. Visibility surely is important as a motivating factor. Visibility equals presence equals support. It would seem essential that an administrator needs to be visible and present in order to lend support to his/her staff. A principal who is rarely around will have a difficult time maintaining staff morale. He/she may not even be aware of the needs of his/her staff in this regard, and runs the risk of losing control and reaping dissatisfaction in the ranks.

Similarities and/or Differences at Elementary, Junior and High School

The findings of this study revealed that, for the most part, there are few differences among the respondents' motivational techniques when they are looked at in terms of teaching level of staff

(elementary, junior, and senior). However, the one area that did stand out as being different was that of decision making. This was not mentioned by any of the elementary school principals as being a source of motivation. This could be an oversight on the part of these principals, although it did not appear to be considered as a motivator for them. The research did, however, indicate that all school leaders should seek to engage teachers in the change process. Maehr, Midgley and Urdan stated that "by involving teachers in the change process and having teachers decide what policies and practices we will examine and change, [one] motivating condition [is] satisfied" (1992, p. 423)

The only other thing that stood out in terms of the three levels of education, was in the category of modeling. While the three elementary principals noted its success as a motivator, only one of the principals at the junior and senior high level felt this to be the case. Overall, the similarities among the different tiers of our educational system surpass the differences noted.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to find out how principals motivate their staff. The study has produced a number of significant

findings from which conclusions can be drawn.

1. A principal's past is significant when it comes to consciously choosing methods for motivating his/her staff. The findings reveal this to be the case. Participants in the study alluded to past experiences as being influential on the way they motivate their staffs today.

2. Eight motivational themes were generated from the data. These were: 1) Reinforcement, 2) Open Communication, 3) Decision Making, 4) Modeling, 5) Visibility, 6) Showing Confidence (P.D.), 7) Support, and 8) Other. Parallels were found in the literature reviewed, especially with regard to the three themes of reinforcement, showing confidence and modeling. However, discontinuities emerged under the themes of open communication, support, and decision making. While the previous two (open communication and support) were strongly supported by the respondents in the study, decision making was just the opposite, with the literary sources deeming it more important than did the respondents.

3. Principals at all levels of public education consciously utilize methods of motivation with their staff. There was not a significant

difference found at the three different tiers (elementary, junior and high school). Visibility and decision making were the two themes that revealed a discrepancy.

4. Principals are all aware of the stresses and strains felt by their staff in this day and age and see a need to play a major role in maintaining or increasing staff morale. The profession has taken a beating in the eye of the public and the political climate, such that it is, has only worsened the plight of the educator. For these reasons, the principal needs to now more than ever, consciously utilize methods of motivation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for research are presented below.

1. Continue qualitative research on motivational techniques utilized by principals. This would be an asset to the field, both at the school level where principals could put methods into practice, and at the level of teaching administrators to lead effectively.

2. Triangulate qualitative and quantitative methods as a means of identifying and elaborating on motivational techniques. For example a questionnaire could be developed from the present data and used to initiate discussion.

3. This research dealt only with the administrators and their perceptions of what it is they do that works to motivate their staff. Perhaps doing the same research, but interviewing teachers, would be a viable area of study. This would help to substantiate the findings of this study.

Personal Reflections

I first became interested in looking at the question "How do principals motivate staff?" about five years ago. In 1994 educational funding was cut dramatically and teacher accountability increased proportionately. Teachers suddenly found themselves in less than desirable working conditions; with increasing workloads, and declining credibility in the eyes of the public. I was aware that many of my colleagues were beginning to loose faith in their chosen profession and there appeared to be a malaise among them. Some personal friends became extremely disillusioned with the profession and indeed spoke of leaving it. However, not all teachers appeared to react in this manner. I recall that I wondered what might be the difference between those who continued to feel enthusiastic about their teaching and those who had lost all of their enthusiasm. Based on my experience I wondered if the administrator might make the

difference, since the "Captain of the ship" was instrumental in the way teachers handled the additional burdens associated with their profession. I felt that it would be an important contribution to my profession if I could in fact, find out just how principals motivated their staffs during these particularly trying times.

I never, for a moment, thought that my curiosity would lead me to realize one of life's educational goals! The completion of a thesis, thus fulfilling the requirements for a Master of Education degree! The findings of this study have substantiated what I assumed from the beginning. Administrators do make a difference and they do so consciously. Each of the interviewees was able to specify motivational techniques he/she utilized to increase staff morale. In many cases, they set in motion those strategies that they themselves responded to as young professionals in the field. Schlechty (1990, p.154) said it very well:

> It is true that those who occupy positions of authority determine, in the long run, the prospects of school reform. They make this determination, not so much because they are leaders, but because they are in a position to determine, within limits, who among their subordinates will be empowered to lead. And the more powerful the leader, the more likely it is that subordinates have been empowered to lead. It is in this sense that the concept of 'every leader a teacher and every teacher a leader' makes sense. And when every teacher is a leader every child can be a success.

On reflection, I think that I was very fortunate to have interviewed these nine principals. They restored my faith in the profession and left me feeling that ours is a noble and committed calling. Each one of them portrayed an individual whose primary interest was that of his/her staff, and that maintaining or increasing staff morale was a must if the children in the system are to reap the benefits of an excellent and well-deserved public education.

I feel that motivation was an important area to look at. As one of the respondents stated at the end of his interview,

> It's a wonderful profession and right now it's a difficult profession to be in and I think motivation is a really important topic to be looking at. And I'm finding that it could be easy to loose your motivation because we've taken a bit of a kicking, education and educators.

So it is, that educators and administrators alike must become aware of the need to motivate and energize each other. I hope that this research study has helped to some degree, to identify methods that all administrators can put into action!

Children are the major stake holders in our educational system. Knowing this to be the case, tampering with public education puts their future at great risk. A strong public education system striving to achieve standards of excellence is not only a dream, but a

necessity in today's global society. Foreseeing this makes the role of educators and their administrators that much more crucial. It is imperative that Alberta recruit and/or maintain enthusiastic, highly motivated teachers for her classrooms!

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University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions

1) Why did you go into teaching?

2) Who did you admire most in the teaching profession when you were a teacher and who most inspired you?

3) Tell me about a principal(s) you've worked with and what qualities you admired about them?

4) What inspired or motivated you to give your best?

5) Did previous principals reinforce your efforts? If so, how?

6) What sorts of things did you not appreciate about the leadership style of any one of your previous administrators?

7) What do you think you do as an administrator to motivate your staff to do their best?

8) Do you motivate teachers, suppport, and custodial staff differently from each other?

9) What motivational technique do you find to be most effective? What is your "secret weapon," that helps get you what you want?

10) Do you have any additional comments about the motivation of staff?

APPENDIX 2
CONSENT FORM

Principle Investigator: Carol Jean Wheeler
Contact Address: C/O Department of Educational Policy Studies, 7th floor, Education North, University of Alberta.
Phone 780-434-3588 (Business) 780-462-7473 (Residence)

I _____agree to take part in a study conducted by Carol Jean Wheeler of the Department of Educational Policy Studies as part of the requirements of the Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration, entitled "How do principals motivate teachers?"
I have read the information form and have been given the chance to ask questions pertaining to the investigation and understand that I may contact Carol Wheeler should I have any further questions regarding the nature of any aspect of the proposed study.

In particular, I understand that this study will require approximately 1 - 2 hours of my time and will include an initial interview, and a potential follow-up interview, and the potential for phone calls for the purpose of clarification of information collected. Informants will be given the opportunity to comment on the final analysed data set to confirm information or negate it.

The risks and benefits of taking part in this study have been explained to me. The issue of confidentiality of information collected has also been explained to me in detail.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the aforementioned investigation at any time without prejudice and that all information collected thereto is my property and will be returned to me automatically upon withdrawal from the investigation.

I understand that data collected will be used as part of a thesis to satisfy the requirements of a Master of Education Degree in Educational Policy Studies and that a manuscript may be prepared for publication. In the event a manuscript is prepared for publication, I understand that in no way will any individual be identifiable through information incorporated into a published manuscript.

Signature (Informant): _____Date: _____ 19__

Signature (Witness): _____Date: _____ 19__

Signature (Prin. Investigator): _____Date: _____ 19__